

PICKETT, GEORGE EDWARD (1825-1875), was a federal general. His charge in the Battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War ranks as one of the great events in American history. On July 3, 1863, Cemetery Ridge was a key to the Union Army's positions. Pickett's division charged up the hill in the face of heavy fire, and his troops broke through a part of the Union lines. Soldiers fought hand to hand. No help came to Pickett from the main Confederate lines, and at last his men fell back, after suffering terrible losses.

The failure of Pickett's charge ended the Battle of Gettysburg, and General Robert E. Lee retreated the next day. The charge and the battle marked the "high water mark of the Confederate cause. The battle shattered the Army of Northern Virginia, and it never regained former power. Although Pickett continued in command of his division, he was broken in spirit. He served with General James Longstreet.

Pickett was born in Richmond, Va., and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1846. He served in the Mexican War and on the Indian frontier. Pickett became a major

in 1862, and fought in the Battle of Seven Pines at Fredericksburg. After the Civil War, he returned to Richmond and headed the Virginia agency of a New York insurance company.



Chicago Historical Society
General George Pickett